

December 26, 1962

Dear Wilbur:

I must apologize for intruding on your time when you must be most busy preparing for the legislative session in connection with federal support to education. But that is precisely why I must write you.

Two years ago I would have had no doubts on such programs. Now I am full of doubts. Why? By its way of reacting to congressional pressure the NIH has substantially lost the confidence of the medical scientists in this country. Frivolous requests for information, delays in processing grant applications, and numerous peremptory and offensive regulations, are completely changing the spirit of a once exemplary cooperation. The atmosphere is rapidly changing to one of beggary rather than support for the advancement of scientific knowledge. I am not encouraged at all by the facts that fine people at NIH have been reduced to this, and that many of the pressures are not publicly visible.

What assurance do we have that the same will not happen to public education, always a more tempting target for congressional investigation to assure that public funds are being "properly" spent? Don't we first have to devise the well-insulated institutions that can keep politics out, and still allow for the principle of democratic control? If the executive branch had been more courageous on the NIH matter, I would not be so gloomy.

Anyhow, best personal regards, and wishes for a happy year.

WILBUR COHEN

(PHS)